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Reverend Mr. BACKUS's

SERMON

AT THE

ORDINATION

OF THE

Reverend Mr. RUSSELL.

The Folly of Man's choosing this World for his Portion.

A

SERMON,

DELIVERED AT THE

ORDINATION

OF THE

Reverend JOSEPH RUSSELL,

TO THE PASTORAL CARE

OF THE

CHURCH AND CONGREGATION

IN

Princeton, Massachusetts,

MARCH 16, 1796.

BY THE

Rev. CHARLES BACKUS *A. M.*

PASTOR *of a* CHURCH *in* SOMERS, CONNECTICUT.

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1796.

Rev. Charles Backus was a very eminent instructer of young men for the ministry. His number of pupils amounted to 67.

MATTHEW XVI. 26.

FOR what is a man profited, if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul? or, what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul?

THE Kingdom of JESUS CHRIST is not of this world. He diſclaimed earthly glory through his whole life, and declared the *Croſs* to be the only way to the crown, which he ſought for himſelf, and his followers. As it was neceſſary, to accompliſh the deſign of his miſſion, that he ſhould pour out his ſoul unto death, he took occaſion "to ſhew "unto his diſciples, how that he muſt go unto Jeruſa-"lem, and ſuffer many things of the elders, and chief "prieſts, and ſcribes, and be killed, and be raiſed "again the third day." On hearing this, Peter "be-"gan to rebuke him, ſaying, Be it far from thee, "Lord: this ſhall not be unto thee." Chriſt, having ſharply reproved that diſciple for his blind zeal, proceeds to diſcourſe on ſelf-denial; and declares that whoever counted his life too dear a ſacrifice to make for his kingdom, ſhould not be conſidered as his friend, nor inherit eternal life. "Then ſaid Jeſus unto his "diſciples, If any man will come after me, let him "deny himſelf, and take up his croſs and follow me.

"For

"For whoſoever will ſave his life ſhall loſe it; and "whoſoever will loſe his life for my ſake ſhall find it."

In the Text, attainments are admitted which never fell to the lot of the moſt enterpriſing and ſucceſsful of mankind. The ſcriptures, like other writings, ſometimes introduce ſuppoſitions never to be realized, or to be brought into exiſtence, for the purpoſe of overthrowing falſe and dangerous practices. No individual of our race ever did, or ever will, poſſeſs "all "the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them:" But, could the fact take place, the acquiſition would amount to nothing which could counterbalance the loſs, or the eternal miſery of the ſoul. The whole world in poſſeſſion cannot make the ſoul happy for the preſent time, afford ſupport in death, or deliver it from the wrath to come.

The folly and danger of chooſing this world for a portion, will appear, from conſidering the worth of the human ſoul, and the conſequences of preferring earthly glory to the ſalvation of the ſoul.

I. Let us conſider the worth of the human ſoul.

To know ourſelves, it is neceſſary to contemplate the faculties of our minds, their duration, and the value ſtamped on them by the Author of our being.

We are conſcious of thought and volition, of pleaſure and pain; and hence are led to conclude that we are poſſeſſed of ſomething of a different nature from the inanimate creation. We cannot account for what we diſcover in ourſelves, without admitting that *ſpirit* is united with this body. This union does not imply a contradiction; and is neceſſary to account for the things we conſtantly experience. The nature of this

union

union is, indeed, above our comprehenſion, but it is not on that account to be diſcredited. If we will believe nothing which we cannot fully comprehend, we ſhall finally land in univerſal doubt.

If man were wholly compoſed of matter, virtue could not be predicated of him any more than of the rain and the ſunſhine; nor could he be chargeable with vice with any greater propriety than earthquakes and volcanoes.

The mind of man is not only altogether different from inert matter, but is alſo diſtinguiſhed from the brutal creation. The perceptions we diſcover in brutes, do not appear to riſe high enough to compare ideas and draw concluſions; far leſs do they appear to be accompanied with any faculty to diſtinguiſh between moral good and evil.

When we conſult ſacred hiſtory, we find man diſtinguiſhed from all the other creatures in this lower world, when he was firſt formed. He was made a little lower than the angels, and crowned with glory and honour. He was created in the image of God; and dominion was given him over the fiſh of the ſea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. The account given of the creation of man, in Geneſis ii. 7, compared with the ſubſequent parts of ſcripture, leads us to conclude that he is compoſed of two diſtinct ſubſtances, *material* and *ſpiritual:* The words are, "And the Lord God formed man of the duſt of "the ground, and breathed into his noſtrils the breath "of life: and man became a living ſoul." To this paſſage, Solomon evidently alludes, when deſcribing man's death, "Then ſhall the duſt return to the earth

"as

"as it was; and the ſpirit ſhall return unto God who "gave it."*

The worth of the human ſoul may be argued from its exertions and attainments. We have ſeen the wilderneſs turned into a fruitful field under the hand of human induſtry. Neceſſity and obſervation have given riſe to innumerable arts for cultivating the earth, and facilitating the labours of the huſbandman. As ſociety has advanced in age, the ingenuity of the mind has been exerted to find out, and bring into uſe, the conveniences and elegancies of life. We cannot withhold our admiration, when we take a ſurvey of the number and variety of laborious and curious arts which appear in large towns and cities. The human mind has led to traverſe the ocean, and has found means to ſteer, in a direct courſe, to diſtant continents, or iſlands, acroſs the pathleſs deep. Man's abilities have been diſplayed in the commercial intercourſe of nations, with its connected policies. To aſſiſt in this deſign, and to give a ſpring to the various employments of life, the bowels of the earth have been ranſacked, and its treaſures drawn forth. How happy for our race, had not the bounties of Providence been perverted to luxury! and become the occaſion of wars, and other miſeries under which the earth hath groaned! How melancholy is the thought, that the ingenuity of mortals ſhould be exerted for their mutual deſtruction!— But to return: Man has not only traverſed this globe from ſide to ſide, and explored its treaſures, but he has travelled among the ſtars; and diſcovered their diſtances, magnitudes, and the periods in which they perform their revolutions. The powers of the mind unfold themſelves, and proclaim its worth when we behold

* Eccleſiaſt. xii. 7.

behold man tracing his relations to ſociety, and forming various combinations for defence and improvement. His faculties, rightly directed, lead him to holy happineſs, and to enjoy communion with God, who is bleſſed for evermore.

It is wholly unaccountable that man ſhould poſſeſs his preſent faculties, were he deſigned to appear in the preſent world for a few days, and then be ſtruck out of being. To aſſign the gratification of ſenſual appetites, or order among his own ſpecies, as the cauſes of man's creation, would increaſe, rather than ſolve the difficulty; becauſe in both theſe reſpects, the human kind is equalled, if not exceeded, by ſeveral claſſes of inferior creatures. The peculiar powers which are given to man, are not neceſſary to render food pleaſant to his palate; as is evident from the appetite of brutes. The ſubordination of the feebler to the ſtronger of the beaſts, is plainly marked in their whole hiſtory; and is much more perfect than any thing of the kind to be diſcovered among our race. The order and harmony obſerved in a ſwarm of bees, may put to the bluſh the members of the beſt civil community the world has ever ſeen. If man, then, did not receive his dignified place in the ſcale of being, for any diſcernable purpoſes in the preſent life, the concluſion is highly probable that he was born for eternity. We admire the wiſdom of God, in proportioning means and end to each other in the natural world; but we muſt be involved in impenetrable darkneſs reſpecting the moral world, if we are to drop our exiſtence at the grave.

Experience teaches that the mind within us is always ſtretching forward, and reaching after higher attainments;

tainments; and that all its acquiſitions do not repreſs, but increaſe this ardor. Different perſons may have different purſuits, and a change of objects may take place in the ſame perſon; but the diſpoſition to make advances in *ſomething*, is never extinguiſhed. Why is man permitted to aſpire after, and anticipate the future, if he be not deſigned to reach beyond this momentary life? Were a *Locke*, a *Newton*, and other bright luminaries, raiſed up to make all their improvements, to qualify them for going back to the womb of nothing!

No one who believes in the moral perfections of God, will admit that the moral law is built on deception; or that rational creatures are liable to feel themſelves accountable to an inviſible judge, through a deceitful ſenſe of liberty implanted in them by the Creator. It may be obſerved, that the ſuppoſition which repreſents mankind free only in appearance, defeats itſelf; for it implies that a ſecret is diſcovered which the Almighty deſigned to conceal from mortals. None, but thoſe who have long rebelled againſt the dictates of their own conſciences, and are ſunk very low in wickedneſs and deluſion, will deny that there is a right and a wrong in actions, and that it may be expected that retribution will be rendered to the juſt and the unjuſt. In the preſent life, we often ſee good men oppreſſed with evils, and the wicked in proſperity: Hence, we are led to conſider ourſelves as being now on trial for a future ſtate, where vice will no longer triumph, and virtue will no longer mourn, as in the preſent world; but each character will be rewarded or puniſhed according to the deeds done in the body.

That the ſoul will never ceaſe to be, is abundantly declared in the ſcriptures. Whatever arguments may be drawn from reaſon in ſupport of the point in hand, we are by no means certain that they would have been attended to, had no knowledge of revelation obtained among mankind. Probably, no conſiderable portion of the human race have been without ſome traditions borrowed from the Bible. The viſionary heaven and hell of the Pagans, evidence how neceſſary a revelation from God is, to lay open the nature and deſign of the retributions of eternity. Life and immortality are brought to light through the goſpel. The doctrine of the reſurrection of the body is known only by revelation—on this ſubject, natural religion is ſilent; it affords no premiſes from which to conclude that the dead body will be reanimated.

The judgment to be paſſed upon each individual of the human race after death, will be followed with interminable happineſs, or miſery.* In the day of the general judgment, the Son of man ſhall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, and ſhall ſit upon the throne of his glory; and before him ſhall be gathered all nations, to receive according to the deeds done in the body. The wicked ſhall go away into everlaſting puniſhment; but the righteous into life eternal.

The whole government of God proclaims the worth of the ſoul. What value is placed upon it, by the ranſom given for thoſe of the human race who are delivered from the wrath to come! No obedience that ſinful man can yield, no offering that he can make, or victim that he can ſacrifice, will do any thing towards appeaſing the wrath of the offended Lawgiver, or

* Hebrew ix. Matth. xxv.

opening

opening a door of hope. Chriſt alone can redeem from the curſe of the law, and procure eternal life for ſinners. Hence the Apoſtle Peter ſaith, in addreſſing believers, "Ye know that ye were not re-"deemed with corruptible things, as ſilver and gold, "from your vain converſation received by tradi-"tion from your fathers; but with the precious blood "of Chriſt, as of a lamb without blemiſh and without "ſpot."* He who became obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs, that ſinners might live, is a DIVINE PERSON! His name is called *Wonderful, Counſellor, The Mighty God, The Everlaſting Father, The Prince of Peace.* He is alſo ſtiled in ſcripture, *The Bleſſed and Only Potentate, The King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.* To him are aſcribed divine attributes and operations, and men and angels are required to worſhip him. Nothing ſhort of the blood of an incarnate Redeemer, *who thought it not robbery to be equal with God*, can ſave one ſoul from eternal death.—Having taken a brief ſurvey of the worth of the human ſoul, let us proceed to conſider,

II. The conſequences of preferring earthly glory to the ſalvation of the ſoul.

From the obſervations already made, it appears that the *mind* conſtitutes the man; and that, therefore, it muſt be the principal ſeat of his pleaſure or pain. From the nature and deſtination of the immortal part, it is evident that this world cannot be an adequate portion for the human race. Thoſe whom the unthinking pronounce the moſt enviable of mortals, are compelled to acknowledge, that high earthly attain-ments

* 1 Peter, i. 18, 19.

ments are so far from affording complete satisfaction, that they involve in greater cares and perplexities.

Besides, flattering worldly prospects may never be realized, and present enjoyments may be removed. Disappointed hopes compose no small part of the present transitory state. Amusements, health and ease, are often exchanged for disquiet, sickness and pain. Riches have been seen to make to themselves wings, and fly away as an eagle towards heaven. Many in high stations have been thrown into disgrace, by the envy and intrigue of rivals, or the caprice of the multitude. To the uncertainty of worldly enjoyments may be added,

That they can abide with their possessors but a short time. This life is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. Death will soon place the rich on a level with the poor, by lodging them together in the bosom of the earth. The distinctions between the high and the low will be lost in the land of silence.

Reason and Religion speak in praise of diligent attention to the necessary concerns of the present life; and are so far from extinguishing, that they inculcate a desire of virtuous fame. We are guilty of ingratitude, when we overlook the means of enjoyment which common providence places before us. When God made the world, and all things therein, he pronounced each part, and the whole collectively considered, to be *good*. Though the ground is cursed, as a fruit of man's apostacy, the works of nature still proclaim the benevolence of the Creator. God hath not left himself without witness to all mankind, in that he doeth good, and giveth them rain from heaven, and fruitful

seasons,

ſeaſons, filling their hearts with food and gladneſs. The various ſocial bleſſings beſtowed upon us demand a tribute of praiſe to the munificent Parent.

FALLEN man overlooks the ſupreme Giver in the gifts of his hand, and worſhips and ſerves the creature more than the Creator. Impenitent ſinners ſet their affections on things on the earth, and deſpiſe the great ſalvation proclaimed in the goſpel. How can thoſe be happy, whoſe higheſt enjoyments are confined to the dawn of their exiſtence? Thoſe who have their portion in this life, have no friend to ſupport them in death, or to conduct them to manſions of joy and bleſſedneſs beyond the grave. This leads us to obſerve,

THAT they who prefer earthly glory to the ſalvation of the ſoul, will plunge in everlaſting miſery. The wicked have no moral fitneſs for the holy ſtate of the new Jeruſalem: "There ſhall in no wiſe enter into "it any thing that defileth, neither whatſoever work-"eth abomination, or maketh a lie." Thoſe who continue enemies to Chriſt until their days on the earth are finiſhed, have no part in his juſtifying righteouſneſs; which alone can preſent any of Adam's race faultleſs before the preſence of God's glory. It is abundantly revealed in ſcripture, that the finally impenitent will go into a ſtate of endleſs puniſhment after death. They "ſhall drink of the wine of the wrath "of God, which is poured out without mixture into "the cup of his indignation; and ſhall be tormented "with fire and brimſtone, in the preſence of the holy "angels, and in the preſence of the Lamb; and the "ſmoke of their torment aſcendeth up for ever and "ever."* In the Parable, recorded in Luke xvi. the rich man whoſe heart was ſwallowed up in earthly

* Revelation xiv. 10, 11.

eaſe

eaſe and affluence, is repreſented after death, as being in hell, and unable to procure a drop of water to mitigate his torment. In the conference between him and Abraham, the holy patriarch declares, "Between us "and you there is a great gulph fixed: ſo that they "which would paſs from hence to you cannot; neither "can they paſs to us that would come from thence." The loſs of the ſoul is an irreparable loſs. There will be no ſpace for repentance in the future world. To be deſtined to think on to eternity with the reflections that will follow a miſpent life, is a dreadful ſtate. What tongue can utter—what mind can conceive the excruciating pains of a ſoul plunged in everlaſting deſpair! tormented by the horrors of an accuſing conſcience, and the wrath of the Almighty! What is a man profited, if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul! or what ſhall a man give in exchange for his ſoul!

The obſervations which have been made lead us to infer,

1. The ſtupidity and baſeneſs of thoſe who wiſh to confine man's exiſtence within the preſent life. They adopt the moſt glaring abſurdities; and impeach the wiſdom and goodneſs of the Creator. The pains and miſeries of this and a future ſtate, form no real objection againſt the benevolence of the Deity in giving us being; when we conſider that natural evil is the fruit of diſobedience, and that good will be brought out of it with reſpect to the moral government of God. How is it poſſible that the revolt of man ſhould detract from the goodneſs of his Maker? Does the abuſe of a privilege deſtroy, or alter its nature? or diminiſh the debt of gratitude due to the giver? Shall we who are but

of

of yeſterday, dare ſtrive with Him who gave us exiſtence, or charge his ways with being unequal?

Those who attempt to conſole themſelves with the imaginary hope that they ſhall ceaſe to be, when their eyes are cloſed upon this world, diſcover a ſordid, grovelling temper, unworthy the rank they hold in the family of the ſupreme Parent. It is not to be ſuppoſed that any would fly to annihilation as a refuge, were it not to quiet their fears of future puniſhment. They who hope to die like the brutes, deſire to indulge brutiſh appetites ſo long as they live. They would wiſh to have their exiſtence prolonged for an endleſs duration, if they could be wrought up into a full aſſurance, that they ſhould indulge, without interruption, in the next world, the ſame luſts which govern them in this. But, rather than ſubmit to the juſt and reaſonable ſervice required of them, as preparatory to holy happineſs hereafter, they cheriſh the deluſive dream of being blotted out of the creation, when they can no longer indulge the luſt of the fleſh, and the luſt of the eyes, and the pride of life. What can furniſh ſtronger proof of a ſtupid and baſe mind, than to adopt the Epicurean creed "Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die"?

2. In a review of the nature and duration of the human ſoul, we are taught that moral rectitude alone can raiſe it to true greatneſs. Men are laid low by their pride and other ſins; and can be exalted only by conforming to their relations to the ſupreme Parent, and his intelligent offſpring. Were it poſſible for moral perfection to be removed from the Deity, he would ceaſe to be an object of reverence; and none could contemplate him but with terror. Holi-

neſs

neſs conſtitutes the beauty and amiableneſs of the intelligent nature, in whatever being or world it be found; and forms the only character which meets the divine approbation. Holineſs is the ground of the diſtinction, which is made between the angels who are round about the throne of the Moſt High, and thoſe who kept not their firſt eſtate. Piety and virtue prepare men for the joys of Paradiſe, and render it meet that in the day of retribution, they ſhould be forever ſeparated from thoſe who ſpend their whole life in ſin. Widely different as the covenant of works and the covenant of grace are, in many reſpects, it is as much the deſign of the latter, as of the former, to inculcate holineſs. The moral image of God reſtored by regeneration, is the ſame image which was loſt by eating the forbidden fruit.

The higher any are placed in the ſcale of being, the lower is their fall, when they riſe up againſt the order eſtabliſhed by infinite wiſdom and goodneſs. When the foundations of the earth were laid, "the "morning ſtars ſang together, and all the ſons of God "ſhouted for joy." How did the glory depart from thoſe ſtars that forgat the ſong! and refuſed any longer to join in the triumph of praiſe! Do we weep for angels? Let us weep for ourſelves—"God made man "upright; but they have ſought out many inventions." Had primeval rectitude remained, the faculties of the human ſoul had never been proſtituted to the indulgence of ſordid appetites, nor to the violation of thoſe laws which are deſigned to promote ſocial happineſs.

The goſpel points out the way to riſe from the ruins of the apoſtacy. The heart muſt return to God, and the whole ſoul muſt be devoted to his ſervice. It is

the voice of the God of love, *Seek ye my face:* To this the obedient heart reſponds, *Thy face, Lord, will I ſeek.* Thoſe who wait on the Lord, diſcover a glory in his kingdom, which infinitely exceeds the amuſements of the gay, the treaſures of the rich, or the honours of the great. They are one with God in their affections, they imitate his benevolence, and mingle ſouls with thoſe who drink at the fountain of goodneſs. Soon will they join the perfect ſociety in heaven, and partake of the joys of immortality.

3. The ſubject of the preſent diſcourſe, leads us to infer the importance of ſpending this life in ſecuring everlaſting happineſs.

The preſent momentary ſtate will draw after it conſequences of vaſt magnitude, and which will abide forever. "Whatſoever a man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo "reap. For he that ſoweth to his fleſh, ſhall of the fleſh "reap corruption; but he that ſoweth to the ſpirit, "ſhall of the ſpirit reap life everlaſting." No one enjoys any ſubſtantial happineſs who is buried in earthly purſuits, and baniſhes, as far as poſſible, from his thoughts, the duties which ariſe from his rational and accountable nature. True peace dwells only in a mind that is reconciled to God. When days of trouble come upon the man who never formed a true eſtimate of life, nor attended to its proper buſineſs, he is liable to be overwhelmed in ſpirit, to be tortured in the recollection of enjoyments that are fled, and to be filled with horror in fear of his approaching doom. The wicked, under their moſt proſperous circumſtances, are "like the troubled ſea, when it cannot "reſt, whoſe waters caſt up mire and dirt. There is "no peace, ſaith my God, to the wicked." We are

warned

warned againſt travelling in a path which leads to pain and anguiſh, fills the awakened conſcience with dreadful apprehenſions on a dying bed, and terminates in endleſs miſery.

To redeem the time indulged us, we muſt connect the preſent period of our exiſtence with that which is future and everlaſting; and give a decided preference to thoſe attainments which afford comfort in a review, when judgment and eternity, in their true import, are ſet home on the mind. Every day, every hour, and every moment of this life, is big with importance, when conſidered in relation to the retributions of the world to come. We are exhorted to uſe this world as not abuſing of it; for the faſhion of this world paſſeth away. Let thoſe who are raiſed above the multitude in riches or honours, be temperate in their indulgencies, munificent in their actions, and humble in their deportment. Let thoſe to whom it is allotted to continue in poverty and obſcurity, through their whole mortal courſe, practiſe ſubmiſſion and contentment. Under trials and afflictions, the followers of Chriſt will derive ſupport and conſolation, from conſidering that he was a man of ſorrows, and acquainted with grief; and that the captain of their ſalvation was made perfect through ſufferings. The ſeaſon for the exerciſe of patience is ſhort—it bears no proportion to the continuance and weight of the glory that will follow. The conflicts of the faithful will ſoon be at an end, they will be carried beyond the reach of pain, and be admitted into that ſtate where are pleaſures for evermore. Knowing that we muſt ſhortly put off this tabernacle, let us give all diligence to make our calling and election ſure: for ſo an entrance

trance ſhall be miniſtered unto us abundantly into the everlaſting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

4. The preſent ſubject and occaſion remind us of the worth and importance of the goſpel miniſtry. It leads more immediately than any other employment, to explore the intellectual and moral world, and to the diſcovery of the means which conduct the ſoul to happineſs. The ſublime objects of eternity furniſh the themes of the chriſtian miniſter's contemplation, and urge him to be inceſſant in his labours. He muſt feel, if his character agrees with his ſtation, that his charge is the moſt ſolemn and weighty that was ever committed to man; and that he ſtands in the greateſt need of divine grace to furniſh him for the work, and to ſtrengthen him in the performance. With humble importunity he will look to the Father of lights, that he might neither teach nor countenance any thing, which tends to the injury of thoſe who ſeek the law at his mouth. He knows that innumerable miſtakes in the management of the moſt intereſting temporal concerns, are of no conſequence, when compared with one fundamental error in what relates to the ſoul. If the love of Chriſt conſtrain him, he will look with great pity and concern on a ſinful race; and knowing the terror of the Lord, he will perſuade men to embrace the things which belong unto their peace, before they are hidden from their eyes. With a glowing warmth he will ſpeak upon the awful ſolemnities of that day, when we muſt all appear before the judgment ſeat of Chriſt, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. He that winneth

ſouls

ſouls is wiſe. He is inſtrumental of rearing a monument in honour of divine grace, which will ſhine with unfading luſtre, when the heavens ſhall paſs away with a great noiſe, and the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat, the earth alſo, and the works that are therein, ſhall be burnt up.

But what creature is equal to the taſk of converting one ſinner from the error of his way? or ſaving one ſoul from death? God only gives ſucceſs to his miniſtering ſervants, and cauſes his ſtrength to be made perfect in their weakneſs. We who are put into the miniſtry are conſtantly reminded to whom we are to go for wiſdom and grace. To the infinite ſource of light and mercy are we to commend him, who is about to take the charge of the flock of God in this place.

Dear Brother,

Behold theſe ſouls to be committed to your charge! each of whom is of infinitely greater value than all the treaſures of this world! Remember the command of God given to the prophet Ezekiel, "Son of man, I "have made thee a watchman unto the houſe of Iſrael: "therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them "warning from me. When I ſay unto the wicked, "Thou ſhalt ſurely die; and thou giveſt him not "warning, nor ſpeakeſt to warn the wicked from his "wicked way, to ſave his life; the ſame wicked man "ſhall die in his iniquity: but his blood will I re-"quire at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, "and he turn not from his wickedneſs, nor from his "wicked way, he ſhall die in his iniquity: but thou "haſt delivered thy ſoul."*

Your mind has been deeply impreſſed with the magnitude and difficulty of the work on which you

* Ezek. iii. 17, 18, 19.

are

are entering; and you have looked forward with a trembling heart to this hour. While you feel your inſufficiency, let it be your earneſt deſire and prayer, that Chriſt would ſtrengthen you for the ſervice to which you are called in his kingdom. You muſt be animated, in midſt of your diffidence, at the thought of taking ſo active a part in promoting that glorious cauſe, with which all good men are united, which brought the Saviour from heaven to earth, and influenced him to lay down his precious life. Do you not feel a thankful heart to Chriſt Jeſus our Lord, for putting you into the miniſtry? Can you not engage with cheerfulneſs to preach the unſearchable riches of redeeming love? Called, as you are, at an earlier period of life than uſual, to take the charge of a flock, you have feared leſt you ſhould not be able to perform the duties of a paſtor. Your modeſty will not permit an enumeration of the reaſons taken from perſonal accompliſhments, which might be urged to juſtify your compliance with the ardent deſires of this people. You know, Dear Sir, that you are not your own; and that you are required as a chriſtian, to follow the directions of God's word and providence. The moſt improved are but learners in the ſchool of Chriſt, and after their higheſt attainments in knowledge and grace, are but children, when compared with the ſtate of manhood to which they will riſe, when they ſhall no longer ſee through a glaſs darkly. We are ready to aſk why ſinful men are employed in preaching the goſpel? And why it were not better that ſome ſuperior order of creatures had been appointed to this ſervice? It is enough for us to know, that *we have this treaſure in earthen veſſels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*

YOUR

YOUR choice of a profeſſion correſponds with the wiſhes of a worthy parent, lately removed from the land of the living;* and who had the pleaſure to ſee a ſon going into the ſame employment with his progenitors, of ſeveral ſucceſſive generations. Had the life of him whoſe paternal care watched over you through the forming age been ſpared, propriety, and filial reſpect, would have aſſigned him the place of the ſpeaker on the preſent occaſion; and this audience would have been inſtructed and entertained by his diſcourſe. But his work is done; and we truſt, he is enjoying the reward promiſed to the good and faithful ſervant.

SERIOUS meditations on the grave and the eternal world, will excite to vigilance and activity in the duties of your office; and fix your attention on the objects ſet before you. Under the influence of a lively faith in "the things which are not ſeen," you will live and preach, in a good degree, as becometh a dying accountable creature. Put on bowels of compaſſion and tenderneſs for the ſouls of this people. Seek not theirs, but *them*. Let it appear that their everlaſting welfare lies near your heart, and that you are willing to ſpend and be ſpent for their immortal intereſt. Long may you continue a helper of their joy, and at laſt meet them at the right hand of Jeſus Chriſt.

BRETHREN OF THIS CHURCH AND CONGREGATION,

WE rejoice with you, on the reſettlement of the goſpel miniſtry in this place. Your unanimity in this important buſineſs, affords a pleaſing proſpect that the man on whom your eyes are now placed, will be eminently uſeful in this part of the vineyard. To receive

* The Reverend NOADIAH RUSSELL of Thompſon in Connecticut, who died October 27, 1795, in the 66th year of his age, and 38th of his Miniſtry.

receive ſuch an anſwer to prayer, and to meet with ſuch ſucceſs in your exertions, call for a tribute of praiſe to the God of all grace. May many here be obedient to the faith, and adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. The holy religion contained in the oracles of truth, teacheth us, that, denying ungodlineſs and worldly luſts, we ſhould live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly, in this preſent world; looking for that bleſſed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

THOSE who have juſt conceptions of the rank man holds in the creation, of the nature and neceſſity of the atonement, and the deſign of ſacred inſtitutions, put a high value on a preached goſpel. They will not look for angelic perfection in the preacher, nor will they be ſtumbled at the imperfections found in the beſt of men, ſo long as they are in the body. They will love and reſpect him who watches for their ſouls, as one that muſt give account; that he may do it with joy, and not with grief.

YOUR liberal engagements for the temporal ſupport of him who is now to miniſter to you in holy things, indicate your belief of the importance of having a ſtated public teacher, and your love of the one choſen; and afford no ſmall encouragement, in connexion with his talents and character, that he will ſecure your laſting eſteem, and be extenſively uſeful in the church of God. From your acquaintance with him, you cannot doubt that he will prize your friendſhip, above every emolument you are able to beſtow. Wound not his delicate, tender ſenſibility, by bitterneſs, or unkind treatment. He will naturally care for your ſtate, and, we hope, will always endear himſelf to the people of his charge by amiable behaviour.

REMEMBER

REMEMBER him in your prayers; and rejoice his heart, and animate his performances, by a general and steady attendance on the worship of God's house. "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, de-"ceiving your own selves." Embrace the gospel in its purity and simplicity, and obey its laws. "The "world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he "that doeth the will of God abideth forever." When Christ shall appear, may you have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

THE salvation of the immortal soul, demands the attention of all mankind. Let the subject be felt, in its own weight, by each member of this numerous Assembly. You will outlive this earth—yonder sun in the firmament—and these material heavens—You will exist forever. While your minds are stretched towards the immeasurable duration before you, think on the importance of the passing moment, as related to the state of endless retribution. Soon will you be ushered into the light of eternity—soon will you appear before the Judge of the living and the dead, and receive the irreversible sentence from his mouth. The prize offered you is of infinitely higher value than worldly empires, and all the treasures that earth can boast. Count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ; and you will be admitted to join the song of saints and angels, before the throne of God—"WORTHY IS THE LAMB THAT WAS "SLAIN TO RECEIVE POWER, AND RICHES, AND WIS-"DOM, AND STRENGTH, AND HONOUR, AND GLORY, "AND BLESSING"!

Amen.

THE CHARGE,

BY

The Reverend JOSEPH JACKSON,

Of BROOKLINE.

Mr. JOSEPH RUSSELL,

PERCEIVING the favour of this people towards you, and being ſatisfied of your abilities and aptneſs to teach, and truſting you have experienced the power and influence of that grace on your own heart, which you are to diſplay to others—We, the Miniſters of Chriſt, have, by prayer, with the uſe of an Apoſtolical Rite, ſeparated you to the work of the Goſpel Miniſtry, ordained you a Paſtor in the Church of Chriſt, committing the Chriſtian Society in Princeton to your overſight and care.

AND now we ſolemnly exhort and charge you, before God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the elect Angels—

TAKE heed to the Miniſtry you have received in the Lord, to fulfil it. Take heed unto thyſelf, and unto thy doctrine; continue in them, for in doing this, thou ſhalt both ſave thyſelf and them that hear thee.

PREACH the word. Teach not for doctrines the commandments of men. Strive not about words to no profit, but to the ſubverting of the hearers. Teach men to obſerve whatever Chriſt has commanded them.

PREACH the unſearchable riches of Chriſt. Inculcate the eſſentials of the goſpel: Repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

THAT you may be furniſhed to your work, and commend yourſelf to every man's conſcience in the ſight of God, give attendance to reading, meditation and prayer.

IT will require much pains to get acquainted with the ſcriptures, and you muſt be very diligent in your ſtudy, if you would appear approved unto God, a workman that need not to be aſhamed. Your office, in the publick exerciſe of it, is great and awful.

THE Overſeer or Biſhop is the guide of the flock. You are to preſide in the duties of publick worſhip in the name of God. You are to be the mouth of the people in prayer, to ſpread their wants and circumſtances before the Throne of Grace. You are alſo to be God's mouth to them, to bring them the inſtructions and reproofs of his holy word.

YOU are to declare the whole counſel of God—At times to ſpeak to every truth—To keep back nothing that is profitable, however diſtaſteful it may be to your hearers.

YOU are to adminiſter all the Ordinances of God's houſe, which are the appointed means of inſtruction, converſion, edification and comfort. What ardour and faithfulneſs are neceſſary to a conſtant adminiſtration of them!

YOU muſt be inſtant in ſeaſon and out of ſeaſon, that, if poſſible, you may impreſs the hearts of your people, and perſuade them to duty.

YOU are to govern the Church with impartiality

and

and courage, not fearing the faces of men. Diſcretion ſhall preſerve thee, underſtanding ſhall keep thee.

Teach not only publickly, but from houſe to houſe. Viſit your flock as their exigencies demand, and your circumſtances will admit of. In this way you may become acquainted with the ſtate of their minds, and order your counſels and admonitions.

But, what fortitude will you need to warn the negligent and ſecure? What wiſdom, to inſtruct the ignorant? What meekneſs, to bear the infirmities of the weak? What knowledge and experience, to comfort the ſorrowful and dejected? You will find the neceſſity of divine aid and influence. This will excite you to the moſt earneſt applications, that the grace of Chriſt may be ſufficient for you, and his ſtrength be perfected in your weakneſs.

To quicken you, Remember you watch for ſouls, as one that muſt give an account! If any periſh through your neglect, their blood will be required at your hands; but if you are faithful in your holy office, you ſhall be pure from the blood of all men:—And when the Chief Shepherd ſhall appear, you ſhall receive a Crown of Glory that fadeth not away.

THE

RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP,

BY

The Reverend REUBEN HOLCOMB,

Of STERLING.

LOVE is the moſt generous paſſion of the human mind. It is the characteriſtic of the bleſſed God, and all holy beings. That *God is Love, and he that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God and God in him*, is the expreſs declaration of Scripture.

LOVE, like the power of attraction in the natural world, unites ſocieties together, giving order and beauty to the whole: It is the fulfilling of the Law, as it reſpects the duties we owe to God and our fellow-men. It is highly neceſſary to all characters, both rulers and ſubjects, learned and unlearned, rich and poor, bond and free; but peculiarly ſo to the miniſters of Chriſt.

As the Goſpel they are to preach, originates from *Love*, and centres in it; and as there are many, great, and trying difficulties, which will unavoidably attend the miniſterial office, it is of high importance that the miniſters of Chriſt have a warm affection for each other. And as the giving of the Right Hand, in civil life, is conſidered as a token of affection for the perſon to whom it is given; ſo it may be in a religious view. And there is a peculiar ſignificance in this rite when

given

given by the miniſters of Chriſt to each other. It ſignifies their mutual affection and eſteem for each other, as Miniſters of Chriſt, embarked in the ſame cauſe, and aiming at one and the ſame great and glorious object. And we find that this practice has been in uſe, from the time of the Apoſtles to the preſent day, on ſuch occaſions as this. Wherefore,

REVEREND AND DEAR BROTHER,

As you have devoted yourſelf to the work of the goſpel miniſtry; have been regularly conſecrated, and inducted to it by prayer, and the laying on of the hands of the Preſbytery; in compliance with uſual practice, founded upon Apoſtolic example, and at the direction of the Eccleſiaſtical Council here preſent, I give You *The Right Hand of Fellowſhip.*

BY this we mean to expreſs our affection for you as a *miniſter* of *Chriſt*, intruſted with a moſt weighty *Charge*; qualified and authorized to preach the *Goſpel* and adminiſter all its ordinances to the proper ſubjects thereof. We conſider you as our Brother in the Goſpel—we welcome you to the ſacred office; aſſuring you, at the ſame time, that, to the utmoſt of our power, we will afford you all that aſſiſtance your circumſtances may require: And the ſame we expect from you; the obligation is mutual.

WE all moſt affectionately congratulate you upon the pleaſing proſpect of uſefulneſs which opens to your view this day: And that your miniſtry be long and proſperous, may *you take up the mantle which lately fell from your worthy father*, and enjoy a double portion of that ſpirit, which was upon him. May the language of your heart be, "*My father, my father, the Chariot of Iſrael, and the horſemen thereof.*" And having been inſtrumental

ſtrumental in rendering your people wiſe and happy, may you ſhine at laſt as the brightneſs of the firmament, and a ſtar, forever and ever.

We alſo congratulate you, the Church and People of God in this Town, under the ſmiles of indulgent Providence towards you; in that it has united your affections, and given you the man of your choice. We hope and truſt, that he will be a faithful miniſter of the New-Teſtament; and be able and willing, at all times, to afford you that inſtruction, advice and comfort, which your circumſtances may require. May you live in love and peace, and realize "how beautiful upon the Mountains are the feet of him, who bringeth glad tidings, and publiſheth ſalvation."

And may you, and all of us, at laſt, meet together in the manſions of everlaſting love, through the merits of our glorious Redeemer; to whom, even the King Eternal, Immortal, and Invisible, the only wiſe God, be the glory and dominion forever.

AMEN.